

ITS Field Operational Test Summary

Southwest Electronic One-Stop Shopping

FHWA Contact: Office of Motor Carrier Safety and Technology, ITS CVO Division, (202) 366-0950

Introduction

The Electronic One-Stop Shopping (EOSS) ITS Field Operational Test was a Commercial Vehicle Operations (CVO) test that demonstrated the technology and process necessary to automate and integrate common motor carrier administrative functions across three states. The test evaluated a system to electronically apply for and receive commercial vehicle credentials. Using the EOSS, a motor carrier could electronically apply for and receive vehicle registration under the International Registration Plan (IRP), register to pay fuel taxes under the International Fuel Tax Agreement (IFTA), and register for Single State Registration (SSR).

The testing and data collection occurred from August 1996 to April 1997 in Colorado, Arkansas, and Texas. The evaluation of the test focused on the performance of the EOSS system, on determining the changes in productivity and user perceptions, and on documenting the institutional issues.

Project Description

The EOSS system provided a user-friendly, graphical computer system that could identify the required commercial vehicle credentials and facilitate their issuance. Industry and state agency users could access the system using a personal computer. The system included two functional modules -- the Information Module and the Credentials Module. The Information Module allowed users to determine what credentials each state required. The Credential Module allowed users to apply for, pay for, receive, and print credentials. Figure 1 shows the EOSS system process.

To use the system, a motor carrier user completed a credential application on a computer running the EOSS software. The software was designed to facilitate user data entry and interaction with the EOSS. The software aided the completion of the form by eliminating re-entry of the same information on different applications and verifying some of the information entered on the application. The user could submit the completed application to the state regulatory agency either electronically (over a value added network -- VAN), by fax, by mail, or by hand carry.

If submitted electronically, the user accompanied the application with electronic funds transfer instructions. If the application met specified criteria, the system would issue a temporary credential (permanent in the case of SSR). The system could immediately print the credential at the carrier's printer or could fax it to a number specified by the carrier.

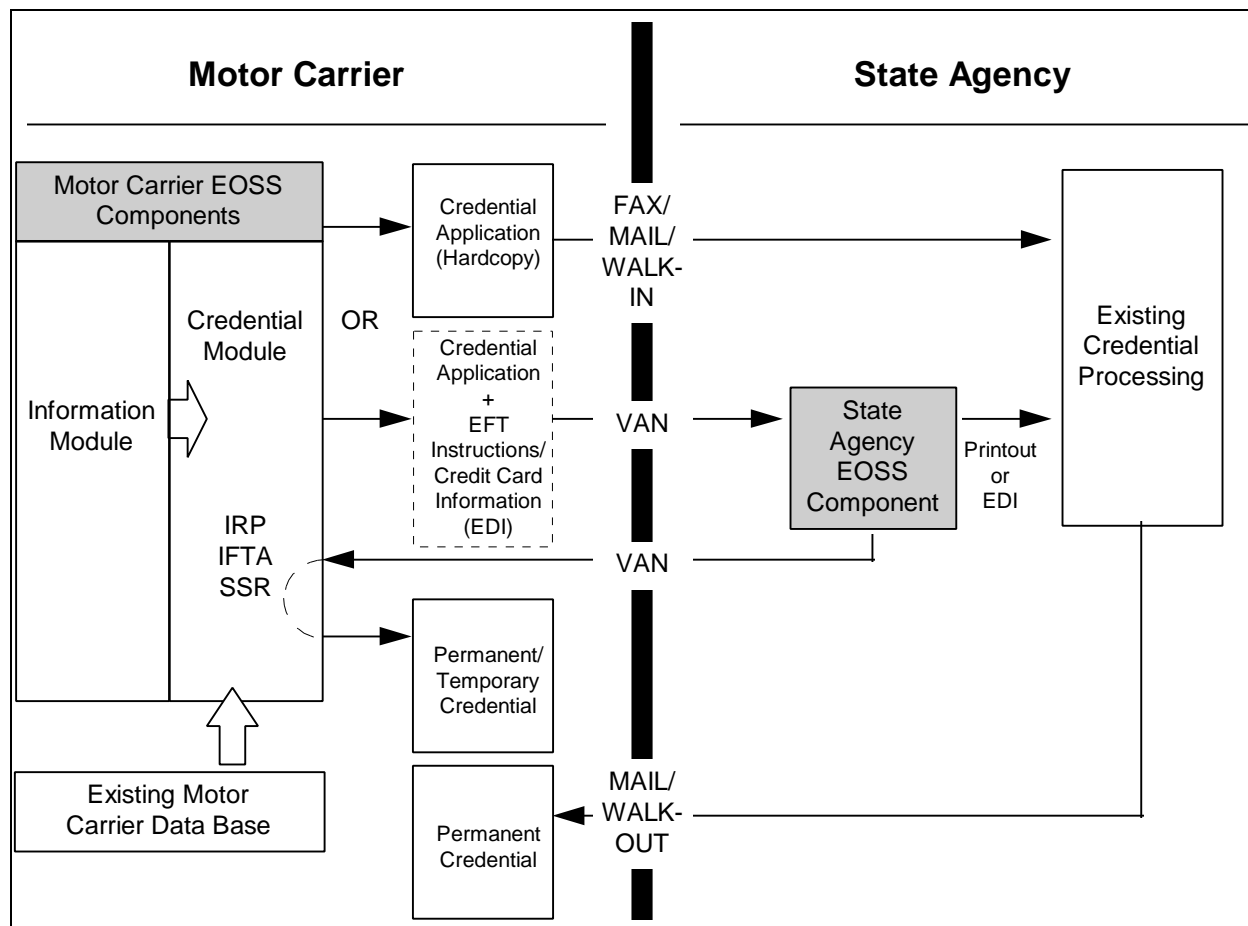


Figure 1: EOSS System Process

The state regulatory agency responsible for issuing permanent credentials processed the application in the standard manner. In Texas the agency was able to transfer the application information electronically to their database for processing.

The test consisted of two evaluations: one for the private sector motor carriers and the other for the public sector state regulatory agencies. In the evaluations, test personnel examined the changes in productivity and in user perceptions caused by the use of the EOSS. They also assessed the requirements and potential for EOSS deployment. They documented and assessed the significant institutional issues that the test encountered. In addition, test evaluators determined the suitability of the system (whether the system is appropriate for the situation) and evaluated the system's performance.

Results

The draft Evaluation Report, due in March 1998, summarizes the two Final Test Reports (motor carrier and state agency).

Results from the motor carrier evaluation showed uniformly positive opinions about the EOSS. All participating carriers considered the EOSS system to be a significant improvement compared to the current methods of obtaining credentials. These carriers cited improvements in productivity

as one of the benefits. The greatest benefit that carriers cited was the time saved by applying for and obtaining the credentials electronically. Other benefits mentioned by the carriers included increased accuracy, convenience, reduced redundancy, ease of learning, and ease of use. Carriers expressed some concern over the possible development of multiple, incompatible credential systems and expressed a preference for uniformity among states. Carriers are also concerned about the system that would be required for the electronic payment of fees.

Results from the state agency evaluation indicate that the states currently have only a small incentive to use the EOSS system. States processed the applications for permanent credentials in the same manner regardless of whether they were submitted by hand or electronically. If the EOSS system can be electronically integrated with the state regulatory authority's documentation and filing process, productivity benefits would accrue to the states as reduced duplication and input time and increased accuracy.

Significant institutional barriers arose during the test process. Many of the agreements used to allow the test to run were temporary. It may not be possible to create long-term agreements similar to these temporary arrangements. The roots of many barriers or issues are found in various state regulatory procedures that may be administrative, statutory, or even constitutional in nature. Resolving these barriers or issues may require legislative or political action.

Legacy

Colorado and Texas left the system in place after official sponsorship had ended. These two states allowed those carriers already participating in the project to continue to use it. Carriers, however, made little use of the system after the Operational Test period ended and neither state made it available to additional carriers. Both Texas and Colorado are actively exploring electronic credentialling, with the Southwest EOSS system being one option.

Arkansas did not continue use of the system after the operational test period ended and is not actively pursuing electronic credentialling.

The commercial parties responsible for the development of Southwest EOSS, In Motion, Inc. and Intelligent Decision Technologies, Inc., are continuing to develop and refine electronic credentialling systems.

Test Partners

Arkansas Highway and Transportation department

Arkansas Motor Fuel Tax section

Arkansas Office of Motor Vehicles/IRP Unit

Arkansas State University

Booz•Allen & Hamilton, Inc.

Colorado Department of Regulatory Services

Colorado Department of Revenue

Colorado Department of Transportation

Federal Highway Administration

Fifteen motor carriers and two credential processing agents

In Motion, Inc.

Texas Department of Transportation

References

Arkansas State University Transportation Management Program, Southwest EOSS Motor Carrier Test Report, December 1997

Arkansas State University Transportation Management Program, Southwest EOSS State Agency Test Report, December 1997